

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATORS MILLS, TODARO, GREENE, LORIGO**

Re: Opposing the Proposed \$25 Annual Vehicle Registration Fee for Upstate Transit Funding and Urging Equitable State Transit Funding for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

WHEREAS, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) provides essential transportation services connecting residents of Erie County and Western New York to family, jobs, education, health care, and childcare; and

WHEREAS, the New York Public Transit Association's President Miguel Velazquez has proposed a \$25 annual NYS Department of Motor Vehicles vehicle registration fee applicable to drivers outside the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) region; and

WHEREAS, a fee imposed by the State on every registered vehicle is just a tax by another name; and

WHEREAS, this fee would place an additional financial burden on Western New York residents who already face significant affordability challenges; and

WHEREAS, downstate transit systems benefit from 18 dedicated funding mechanisms while upstate systems have access to only four, representing a long-standing structural inequity in how New York State funds public transportation; and

WHEREAS, it is not appropriate for Albany to look to upstate drivers to subsidize a transit funding shortfall resulting from the State's own chronic underinvestment in transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Legislature believes the solution to upstate transit funding shortfalls should prioritize direct and equitable state investment rather than new fees on drivers, consistent with Senator Patrick Gallivan's call for upstate transit funding equitable with that provided downstate; and

WHEREAS, Erie County is already doing its part, as the only county in New York State that shares sales tax revenue with its regional transportation authority, an amount expected to reach nearly \$28 million in 2026; and

WHEREAS, Applying a driver fee designed for a dense, transit-rich metropolitan region to a largely car-dependent Western New York population is not equity, it is a downstate solution imposed on an upstate problem; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Legislature supports reliable public transit throughout Western New York and recognizes that sustained transit funding is critical to the region's economy and quality of life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby opposes the proposed \$25 annual supplemental vehicle registration fee on Western New York drivers as a mechanism for funding public transit systems; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature calls upon Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature to address the upstate transit funding gap through direct and equitable state appropriations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, and the members of the Western New York delegation to the New York State Legislature.